1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906–1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

623 562 a good deal of influence in connection with quarrels either of individuals or of local groups.

• 756 There are certain men, and possibly sometimes women, who have an influence over their fellows owing to their being credited with the possession of supernatural powers. These men, called in *Aka-Jeru oko-jumu* (literally "one who speaks from dreams"), will be described in a later chapter. As they are believed to have command over the powers that produce and cure sickness everyone tries to be on good terms with them, avoiding giving them offence in any way, and seeking their favour by presents of food or other things. It sometimes happens that a chief (the leading man of a local group) is at the same time a medicine-man or *oko-jumu*, but the two positions are entirely distinct and separate, and a man may be a medicine-man who possesses none of the qualities that are necessary for a head man.

673 There does not appear to have been in the Andamans any such thing as the punishment of crime. We may distinguish two kinds of anti-social actions which are regarded by the natives as being wrong. The first kind are those actions which injure in some way a private individual. The second are those, which, while they do not injure any particular person, are yet regarded with disapproval by the society in general.

Amongst the anti-social actions of the first kind are murder, or wounding, theft and adultery, and wilful damage of the property of another.

578 627 682 152 No case of one Andamanese killing another has occurred in recent years. Quarrels sometimes occur between two men of the same camp. A good deal of hard swearing goes on, and sometimes one of the men will work himself up to a high pitch of anger, in which he may seize his bow and discharge an arrow near to the one who has offended him, or may vent his ill-temper by destroying any property that he can lay his hands on, including not only that of his enemy but also that of other persons and even his own. At such a display of anger the women and children flee into the jungle in terror, and if the angry man be at all a formidable person the men occasionally do the same. It apparently requires more courage than the natives usually possess to endeavour to allay such a storm of

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

reached the age when it is considered proper for a man to marry. In recent times at least one young man has refused to undergo the privations connected with the initiation ceremonies. This was of course a case of gross rebellion against the customs of the tribe, but there was no way of punishing him or of compelling him to conform, save by showing him that he was an object of contempt and ridicule to others. Probably such a refusal to conform to tribal customs could not have taken place before the British occupation of the islands.

Another class of wrong actions consists in the breaking of ritual prohibitions. There are, for example, as will be shown in a later chapter, a number of actions which it is believed may cause bad weather, such as burning bees'-wax or killing a cicada. There is, however, no punishment that can be meted out to any one who does any of these things. The punishment, if we may call it so, is a purely supernatural one, and it strikes not only the offender but every one else as well. In the legends of the Andamanese there are one or two stories related of how one of the ancestors, being angry, deliberately performed one of the forbidden actions and thus brought a storm that destroyed many human beings[1]. There are other ritual prohibitions the non-observance of which is supposed to bring its own punishment on the offender, who, it is believed, will be ill.

The medicine-men (*oko-jumu*) are credited with the power to work evil magic, and by its means to make other people ill, and even to kill them. A man suspected of evil magic might be liable to the vengeance of those who thought that they had been injured by him, but though the practice was regarded as reprehensible it does not seem that the society ever acted as a whole to punish a man suspected of it.

Children are reproved for improper behaviour, but they are never punished. During their years of infancy they are much spoilt, not only by their parents but by every one. During the period of adolescence every boy and girl has to undergo a somewhat severe discipline, to be described in a later chapter.

[1] See below, Chap. IV.

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

associated with *Puluga* or *Biliku*. All the versions that I heard, however, referred to the past and not to the future[1].

The Andamanese speak of unconsciousness as "death," and regard a person who has been unconscious for some time as having been dead and returned to life again. I was once told that an old man in the village was "dead" and found him in a state of coma from which he recovered and lived for several days. There are stories of persons having returned to life even after they have been buried. One such tale was told me in the North Andaman. A man died and was buried. As his friends and relatives, after packing up their belongings, were leaving the camp in their canoes, the man's voice was heard calling. His wife and mother turned back and met him and took him in their canoe. He lived for some time after this and then he died and was buried again. Again the same thing happened, the dead man re-appearing just as they were setting off in their canoes from the camp that they were deserting on account of his death. Finally the man died a third time. When he was buried this time the men dug a very deep hole some distance from the camp, and then hurried back to the camp and hastily gathered up their belongings and left it. Nothing more was seen of the dead man, but when, after the lapse of some months, they went to dig up the bones, they found the mat and leaves and rope in which the corpse had been bound, but there were no bones.

Amongst the coast-dwellers of the North Andaman I found a belief that the soul of a dying man goes out with the ebbing tide.

There are, amongst the Andamanese, certain individuals who are distinguished from their fellows by the supposed possession of supernatural powers. These specially favoured persons

[1] It may be noted that in the Andamanese languages there is no future tense of the verb, and it is often very difficult to know whether a speaker is referring to the present or to the future. Further, although there is a past tense, a native often uses the present tense in a narrative relating to the past, so that a statement relating to the past and one relating to the future may have exactly the same grammatical form. Mr Ellis, writing in the *Journal of the Philological Society* (1882) from information supplied by Mr Man, gives a verbal suffix *-ngabo* denoting the future in the *Aka-Bea* language. Mr Portman points out that this is an error. (*Notes on the Languages of the South Andaman*, p. 88.)

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

●756 791 correspond, to some degree, with the medicine-men, magicians or shamans of other primitive societies. The name for these medicine-men in the North Andaman is *oko-jumu*, meaning literally "dreamer" or "one who speaks from dreams" from a stem *-jumu* the primary meaning of which refers to the phenomena of dreams. In *Aka-Bea* the corresponding term is *oko-paiad*, and according to Mr Man, this term also means "dreamer." Mr Portman, however, gives *taraba* as the *Aka-Bea* word for "dream" or "to dream."

According to a statement by Mr Man, only men can possess the powers that entitle them to be regarded as *oko-paiad*[1]. The natives whom I questioned told me that a woman may possess the same powers, though it is more usual for men to become famous in this way than women. There is no very clear dividing line between those who are *oko-jumu* or *oko-paiad* and those who are not; one person may possess the powers in only a slight degree, so as scarcely to differentiate him from others, while another may be much more highly gifted.

At the present time it is no longer possible to obtain full and satisfactory information on this subject. Most of the old *oko-jumu* and *oko-paiad* are now dead. Amongst the younger men there are a few who pretend to the position, but the recent intercourse with foreigners has produced a degree of scepticism in such matters that makes it difficult or nearly impossible to obtain any reliable information as to the former beliefs from any but the very old men. To this difficulty must be added that in talking to some of the very few old men who could have given more valuable information I had to make use of an interpreter, and though they might have been willing to confide to me some of the secrets of their profession they would not do so before a younger man of their own race.

791 761 756 775 The powers of a dreamer, supernatural as they are, can only be acquired by supernatural means, through contact in one way or another with the spirits (i.e. the *Lau* or *Čauga*). One way of coming into contact with the spirits is by death. If a man should, as the natives put it, die and then come back to life again,

[1] Man, *op. cit.* p. 96.

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

he is, by that adventure, endowed with the power that makes a medicine-man. One man of the *Aka-Kǫra* tribe was pointed out to me as having obtained his powers in this way. It would seem that during a serious illness he was unconscious for some twelve hours or so, and his friends thought that he was dead. A medicine-man whom I met with in the *A-Pučikwar* tribe was said to have died and come to life again three times. Another man, whom I did not meet, was described to me as a great *oko-jumu*, and from the description given it seemed to me that he was subject to epileptic fits. As against this, however, Mr Man states that "epilepsy is a recognised form of malady, but the fits are not regarded in a superstitious light[1]."

Another way in which a man can acquire magical powers is by direct communication with the spirits. A man who died a few years ago was believed by the natives to have once met with some spirits in the jungle, and to have acquired in this way the powers of an *oko-jumu*. He used to go off into the jungle by himself at intervals and hold communication with the spirits with whom he had made friends. From such a visit he had returned with his head decorated with shredded palm-leaf fibre (*kǫro*) which had, so he said, been placed on him by the spirits. This man had a reputation as a powerful *oko-jumu*.

In a less degree the powers of an *oko-jumu* may be obtained through dreams. It is believed that certain men have the power of communicating with the spirits in dreams, and such men are *oko-jumu*. If a man or boy experiences dreams that are in any way extraordinary, particularly if, in his dreams he sees spirits, either the spirits of dead persons known to him when alive, or spirits of the forest or the sea, he may acquire in time the reputation of a medicine-man.

A man may claim some degree of magical power, and yet his claims may not be recognized by others. Each *oko-jumu* has to make his own reputation, and to sustain it when made. This he can only do by demonstrating his power to others. Once this reputation is his, he not only receives the respect of others but also makes a considerable personal profit. Every one is anxious to be on good terms with one who is believed to

[1] Man, *op. cit.* p. 83.

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

have extraordinary powers. Hence a man who is an acknowledged *oko-jumu* is sure to receive a good share of the game caught by others, and presents of all kinds from those who seek his good-will.

As the name implies, and in whatever way his power may have been obtained, an *oko-jumu* is privileged to dream in a way that less favoured persons do not. In his dreams he can communicate with the spirits of the dead. In dreams, also, so the natives say, he is able to cause the illness of an enemy or to cure that of a friend.

By his communication with the spirits, in dreams, or in waking life, the *oko-jumu* acquires magical knowledge that he is able to turn to account in curing illness and in preventing bad weather. When a person is ill the *oko-jumu* is often consulted as to the best means of treating the patient. His treatment is often limited to the recommendation, or the application, of some one or other of the recognized remedies. He may undertake to dispel the spirits that are supposed to be the cause of the disease, which he does by addressing them and conjuring them to go away, or by the use of one or other of the substances and objects that are believed to have the power of keeping spirits at a distance. Sometimes the *oko-jumu* will promise to cure the patient by means of dreams. It is believed that in his dreams he can communicate with the spirits and can persuade them to help him to cure the sick person.

Besides their power of causing or curing sickness, the *oko-jumu* are credited with being able to control the weather. As has been shown, the Andamanese believe that the weather is under the control of two beings named *Biliku* and *Tarai*. There is, however, an alternative and contradictory belief, which is also held, that the weather is controlled by the spirits, and particularly by those of the sea. The means taken by magicians or others to prevent bad weather can be divided into two kinds according as they are directed against *Biliku* or *Tarai*, or against the spirits of the sea. As an example of the very simple rites which are performed for this purpose, two cases may be quoted. One of the *oko-jumu* of the Northern tribes, now dead, once stopped a very violent storm by crushing between two stones

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

a piece of the *Anadendron paniculatum* and diving with it into the sea where he placed it under a rock on the reef. A more recent example is very similar. A man still living, named *Jire Pilečar*, who was, in a way, the successor of the man formerly mentioned, is said to have stopped a violent storm by using the leaves and bark of the *Ficus laccifera* in the same way, that is by crushing them and placing them under a rock in the sea. In both these cases it would seem that the rite was directed not against *Biliku* and *Tarai*, but against the *Jurua*.

Apart from his power to communicate directly with the spirits, the *oko-jumu* owes his position to a superior knowledge of the magical properties of common substances and objects. This knowledge he is supposed to obtain from the spirits. However, a lesser degree of knowledge on such matters is possessed by everybody. Thus in the treatment of sickness there are a number of magical remedies of which anyone can make use without consulting an *oko-jumu*.

A complete enumeration of all the things that are believed to possess magical properties is, of course, not possible, but the following notes refer to all the most important.

We may consider first of all the magical properties of mineral substances. One of the most important of these is red ochre. Yellow ochre, which is found in pockets in many parts of the islands, is collected and burnt, when it turns red, and the powder so obtained is either used by itself or is made into a paint with pig or turtle fat. The powder is mixed with water and taken internally. Red paint is applied to the throat and chest for coughs and colds and sore throats, and round the ear for ear-ache. When a man feels unwell he often smears red paint on his upper lip just below his nostrils. In this way, the natives say, the "smell" of the paint cures his sickness. The paint is sometimes used as a dressing for wounds or centipede bites. Its use for ornamenting the body on ceremonial occasions has already been noted in the last chapter.

In the North Andaman a soft red stone is found, called *talar*. This is used as a substitute for red paint. It is rubbed on the body, or it is powdered and the powder is mixed with water and taken internally.

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

CHAPTER IV

MYTHS AND LEGENDS

THE Andamanese have a number of stories which are told to the younger people by their elders and relate to the doings of their ancestors in a time long ago. Some of these stories are recorded in the present chapter. A difficulty in the way of giving any clear and readable account of them is the fact that there are many slightly different versions of one and the same legend. To some extent the variations are local, each tribe, and even each portion of a tribe having its own set of legendary stories. Besides these local variations there are also individual variations. Two men of the same tribe may relate what is substantially the same story, yet each chooses his own words and gestures, and to some extent they may even arrange the incidents differently.

In the last chapter it was mentioned that there are certain individuals, known as *oko-jumu* in the North Andaman and *oko-paiad* in the South, who are believed to have special knowledge as to the spirits and as to the magical efficacy of remedies for sickness. It is these *oko-jumu* also who are the authorities on the legendary lore of the Andamanese. In the case of magical remedies there is a certain common stock of beliefs as to the efficacy to be attributed to different substances, such as leaves of different plants, and on the basis of these beliefs the *oko-jumu* elaborates the remedies that he uses in particular cases. Each *oko-jumu*, however, prides himself on being, to some extent, original. An example of this has been already mentioned. When a great storm arose an *oko-jumu* of one of the Northern tribes succeeded in stopping it (in the belief of

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

the natives) by placing a piece of the crushed stem of the *Anadendron* creeper under a particular stone in the sea. On a later occasion another storm arose, and the successor of the first-mentioned *oko-jumu* was appealed to that he might exert his powers. He did not simply imitate his predecessor, but he placed a piece of crushed bark and twigs of the *Ficus laccifera* in the sea under a different stone. In very much the same way there is a common stock of beliefs as to the events that took place in the time of the ancestors, but each *oko-jumu* builds up on this basis his own particular set of legends, so that it is rarely that two of them tell the same story in the same way. An *oko-jumu* may obtain for himself a reputation by relating legends of the ancestors in a vivid and amusing way. Such a man would be able to invent new stories by combining together in his own way some of the traditional incidents. The desire on the part of each *oko-jumu* to be original and so to enhance his own reputation is a fertile source of variation in the legends.

This lack of traditional form, which is a very important characteristic of the Andamanese mythology, may be compared with their lack of traditional songs. Just as every man composes his own songs, so, within certain limits, every *oko-jumu* relates in his own way the legends of his tribe. But whereas every man is a composer of songs, only a certain number are regarded as having authority to speak on the legends.

Underlying the legends of any tribe there are a certain number of beliefs or representations with which every native is familiar. It is on the basis of these that the *oko-jumu* elaborates his own doctrine, if we may call it so, which he hands on to his followers, who in turn may become *oko-jumu* and produce further slight modifications of their own. Thus the legends are continually being changed, though in any one generation the changes introduced are slight, and it would take a long time for important changes in belief to be brought about. There is evidence, however, that a succession of leading men in the *A-Pučikwar* tribe have succeeded in introducing a new doctrine as to the weather, making *Bilik* the name of a class of beings instead of the name of a single being, and that this

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

I gathered a few hints that they even believe that at times the spirits can and will help them. Thus a man will call on the sea-spirits of his own country to send plenty of turtle (over which the spirits seem to be assumed to have power) when he is going hunting. A very important fact in this connection is the different way in which a native regards the spirits of his own country and of other parts, the latter being thought to be much more dangerous than the former because presumably they are the spirits not of relatives and friends but of strangers at the best or enemies at the worst. 182X

There is other evidence that the Andamanese do not regard the power that is possessed by the spirits as being essentially evil. This power, whereby the spirits are able to cause sickness, seems to be shared by the bones of dead men. Indeed the Andamanese call such bones "spirit-bones" (*lau-ṭoi*, *čauga-ta*). Now this power in the bones (though it may at times be supposed to cause sickness) is more commonly made use of in order to prevent or cure it.

The most conclusive evidence that the power of the spirits is not intrinsically evil, but may be used to produce both good and evil is afforded by the beliefs about medicine-men or dreamers (*oko-jumu*). There are three ways in which a man can become a medicine-man. The first is (as the natives put it) by dying and coming back to life. Now when a man dies he becomes a spirit and therefore acquires the peculiar powers and qualities of a spirit, which he retains if he returns to life. Secondly, if a man straying in the jungle by himself be affronted by the spirits, and if he show no fear (for if he is afraid they will kill him) they may keep him with them for a time and then let him go. Such a man, on his return, is regarded as being a medicine-man, and possessing all the powers of medicine-men. I was told of one man who became a medicine-man in this way within living memory, and it was stated that when he returned from the forest where he had been kept by the spirits for two or three days he was decorated with *kọro* fibre. We have seen that this fibre is used by the spirits in the ceremony by which they initiate dead men, and its presence on the returned warrior was perhaps accepted by his friends as evidence that he had been initiated by the spirits. The third and last way in which a man may become a medicine-man is by having 182X 791 756

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

intercourse with the spirits in his dreams. This is a point to which it will be necessary to return later. For the present it is sufficient to note that in every instance the power of the medicine-man is believed to be derived from his contact with the spirits in one of the three possible ways.

We are justified in concluding that the special power of the medicine-man, by which he is distinguished from his fellows, is simply the same power that is possessed by the spirits, from contact with whom he has obtained it. The medicine-man is believed to be able both to cause and to cure sickness, to arouse and to dispel storms. In other words he has power for both good and evil, and we must conclude that the spirits have the same. Moreover, it is commonly said that the medicine-man is able to produce the effects he does, whether they be harmful or beneficial to his fellows, by communicating with the spirits in dreams and enlisting their aid. This would seem to prove the point that I am here concerned with, that the power possessed by the spirits, though contact with it is always dangerous, may yet in certain circumstances be of benefit to the society, and is therefore not essentially evil in nature.

The Andamanese believe that a medicine-man communicates with the spirits in sleep, and this is not the only evidence that they believe sleep to be a condition in which contact with the world of spirits is easier than in waking life. It is believed that sickness is more likely to begin during sleep than when awake. During the initiation ceremonies the initiate is required to abstain from sleep after eating pork or turtle, and this would seem to be because sleep is regarded as generally dangerous and therefore to be avoided on such occasions as this when every precaution needs to be taken.

The explanation of this belief seems to lie in the fact that sleep is a condition of diminished social activity, in which the individual is withdrawn from active social life, and is therefore also withdrawn from the protection of the society. After eating turtle the initiate is in urgent need of the protection of the society, which would be lost to him if he were permitted to sleep. After a death, when the corpse remains in the camp all night the people remain awake, and since there is no other common activity in

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

started slapping his hands on Toncootēi's and exposing them intermittently to the fire. All this lasted over a quarter of an hour. The patient was then made to lie prone, with his legs spread out, to receive a foot massage as described above, for another quarter of an hour. Torso, feet and hands were worked over, with short pauses for artificial respiration by means of compression. Subsequently his back, and particularly the sacral region, was vigorously rubbed by willing hands and feet. Three men performed this operation. Toncootēi was finally allowed to rest, between two fires kept burning all night. Sunrise found him alive, and the fever had abated, due, I think, to a good European laxative that I had persuaded him to take.

In March 1952, I witnessed a sad episode, followed by the death of the patient, near my Labanare camp. A young mother was suffering from breast rhagades. Her baby was less than a month old, and she was also suckling another child, almost two years old, who had sharp teeth. It is a frequent kindly habit of the Onge to adopt babies ; and it is customary to breast-feed them up to the age of four. Some interesting consequences arise out of this habit, but I shall not analyze them here. A minor detail : since they are allowed to suckle when they wish and are weaned so late, Onge children do not indulge in thumb sucking. Considerable reactions are spontaneously established between the two terminal parts of the digestive tube – oral and anal, as though in physiological conflict. Once more I affirm that the evidence of Onge sexual behaviour positively denies Freudian theories with regard to the sexual life of children. Furthermore, young anthropoids and primitive people behave identically in this respect.

The adopted baby gave the young mother nipple wounds that became infected and suppurated. For lack of proper care and in unhygienic surroundings, the infection spread to the rest of her body. I found her suffering terribly from pain in the breast, muscular spasm and high fever. The Onge had applied their usual external remedies to her body, from head to foot. Very tight bandages of ficus bark, renewed three times a day, were wrapped arounds legs, arms, trunk and abdomen. Bright red ochre – rare in Little Andaman and considered more effective because of its brilliant colour – was painted onto the afflicted breast. The poor young woman looked at me hopefully. I suggested her immediate removal to Port Blair Hospital, and sent radio messages from my camp to the Chief Commissioner, Mr. A. K. GHOSH. He responded generously by ordering a ship to call for the patient, but the journey was useless because her relations were opposed to displacing her. In March 1952 my friendship with the Onge was only starting ; this will explain their refusal to follow my advice. Without proper care, in a place like Little Andaman, the patient died four days after my arrival at the camp.

Prescription of medicines and treatments such as those described above is not determined by specialists. Everybody submits to treatment, with general approval, convinced of its effectiveness. Witch doctors do not exist and perhaps never existed in the Andamans. Nothing, then, is known by the Onge of the dances and exhibitions, commonly executed elsewhere for curative purposes, that influence the patient on a psychobiological basis. As they have

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

no specialized physicians, the Onge do not understand that payment can be exacted for medical care. This stems from the fact that wages are not considered by those happy people as payment for any kind of work whatsoever, but only as a gift. I realized this when I tried to pay my guides after our extenuating marches through the jungle : in order to avoid offending the natives that we had casually met in the course of our trip, I had to give equal reward to everybody.

The Onge consider some men or women better endowed than others with anti-malefic influence ; but these too neither demand nor receive wages for their services. Evil spirits or evil persons are believed to be principally responsible for illness. A series of superstitions and remarkable habits derive from this belief. The above-mentioned precautions concerning the *naquinēghē* are among them. For identical reasons they carefully hide hair cuttings, but not nail parings, for the simple reason that nails are never cut but worn down by digging for edible roots, fishing, and other rough work. Superstition, as we know, is also the reason for painting the body to prevent fever and other ills.

In the depths of their jungle the Onge appear to practice some kind of witchcraft. On several occasions I noticed the mysterious behaviour of some natives travelling with me. Occasionally a man left our marching column to examine the inside of a huge hollow tree and signal to his friends. They did not prevent me from looking into the hollow, where I saw only a simple structure of short sticks resembling a trap without being one. The Onge do not use traps ; moreover, those structures were far too flimsy to catch anything. Often, two or three men assembled in consultation, rearranged the sticks that had probably been dislodged by the passage of lizards, crabs or other small animals, and walked away silently. I could get no explanation on the matter. Certainly the Onge are sagacious observers of animal and vegetable life and have deep knowledge of their hidden properties. Some trees are probably used for magical purposes, but, I insist, it is impossible as yet to affirm it. The structures in question consisted of four vertical sticks, about 30 cms long, joined at the top by four more sticks of approximately the same length, placed horizontally. The result was a box-like frame, loose and unsecured. The slightest disturbance, such as a light breeze, could destroy the flimsy construction. As far as I could guess they invested those structures with curative properties, but in what manner remains a mystery. I noticed analogous practices among Central African Pygmies and other primitives.

It is very clear that the Onge dread illness and magic spells, for they consider themselves at a loss in fighting such evils. Unhygienic habits are of no importance to them.

Resting is considered favorable to good health. The Onge indulge voluptuously in rest, interrupting it, however, with too frequent sexual excursions. They mainly rest from doing nothing, because 90 % of their time is spent in what, for them, is the most agreeable manner of enjoying life.

In mid-March, when the honey harvest reaches its peak, the Onge guzzle